



Theatre of the Oppressed

By Augusto Boal

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Theatre of the Oppressed By Augusto Boal

"Boal and his work are marvelous examples of the post-modern situation-its problems and its opportunities. Twice exiled, Boal is 'at home' now wherever he finds himself to be. He makes a skeptical, comic, inquisitive and finally optimistic theatre involving spectators and performers in the search for community and integrity. This is a good book to be used even more than to be read." - Richard Schechner

"Augusto Boal's achievement is so remarkable, so original and so groundbreaking that I have no hesitation in describing the book as the most important theoretical work in the theatre in modern times - a statement I make with having suffered any memory lapse with respect to Stanislavsky, Artaud or Grotowski." - Goerge E. Wellwarth

Originally basing himself at the Arena Stage in Sao Paolo, Brazil, Augusto Boal developed a series of imaginative theatre exercises which promote awareness of one's social situation and its limitations, individual attitudes, and even how our bodies are bound by tradition. Boal is continued his explorations in Paris, where he directed Le CEDITADE (Centre d'Etude et de Diffusion des Techniques Actives d'Expression - Methode Boal), in addition to traveling and lecturing extensively in other countries. On May 2, 2009, Boal died at age 78 in Rio de Janeiro.

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Editorial Review

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Is the fundamental relationship between an actor and an audience an equal and active one, or is it a situation that encourages passivity and division? This is the question at the heart of Augusto Boal's revolutionary *Theatre of the Oppressed*, originally published in 1979. Boal, a Brazilian artist and activist, has written a work that challenges the very premise of Western theater, starting with Aristotle and the first dramatists, and explores what social constructs lie behind the traditional theater form. Then, having explained such often invoked (but rarely scrutinized) terms as *imitation*, *tragedy*, and *justice*, he puts forward a new type of drama that bridges the long-existing gap between theater and politics. Central to his thesis is an attempt to bring spectators into an active role with the drama, encouraging them to comment on the social situations they see presented and suggest potentials for change. Other chapters explore the writings of Hegel and Brecht, along with a lengthy analysis of one of the most profound political thinkers to ever pen a play, Machiavelli and his bitter comedy *Mandragola*. Boal's book is a challenging one for American actors often politically naive and heavily schooled in the traditions of Stanislavsky-based "naturalism," but this text is vital reading for activists, progressives, and all artists trying to effect social change. --*John Longenbaugh*

Review

'One of the most revered figures in world theatre ... the liberation theologian of theatre.' The Guardian
'Should be read by everyone in the world of theatre who has any pretensions at all to political commitment.'
John Arden'So remarkable, so original and so ground-breaking that I have no hesitation in describing the book as the most important theoretical work on the theatre in modern times.'
George Wellwarth

About the Author

Augusto Boal is a renowned dramatist and the author of several works on politics and theatre. He lives in Brazil.

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